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TWO ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING AND THE CLOSE

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Free Church of Scotland,

IN MAY 1870.

BY

JOHN WILSON, D.D., F.R.S.,

MODERATOR OF THE ASSEMBLY.

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OPENING ADDRESS.

19TH MAY 1870.

REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—I feel greatly obliged to you for the high honour which you have now conferred upon me. I accept it with much deference, viewing it principally as an indication of the interest which you take in the evangelistic work in the Eastern world, to which I have already devoted upwards of two score years of my life. In saying this, I respectfully and earnestly ask you to join me in thanksgivings to God, who has so long given me the privilege of humbly bearing "the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel" (and that frequently in circumstances demanding peculiar study, labour, and exposure)—not merely in the great city, now the largest next to London in the British empire, in which I have mainly resided, but in contiguous and distant provinces, and in wildernesses and gloomy forests, in travelling in which I have often been in danger, literally from the arrow that flieth by day, the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday. I request also your prayers, that I may appropriately discharge any duties to which I may be called on this occasion—not without importance, as usual, in connection with our own beloved portion of the Lord's vineyard, with the movements which we are required to note in the ecclesiastical world around us, and with the religious and social advancement of our own and other countries of the world. My individual point of

view is, in some respects, that of a distant observer, which, though it has obviously certain disadvantages, is not, I trust, unfavourable to a spirit of evangelical catholicity, recognising the general interests of Christianity, on which alone, under the administration of the risen and exalted Saviour, the hopes of humanity must rest. In the situation in which I am placed, by your great favour, I do not intend to refer, as a partisan, to any of the precise issues which may be raised in immediate connection with the business of the Assembly, —which I trust will be transacted in a fraternal and charitable spirit, becoming a great Church, signally blessed of God, and desirous of standing in right relationship to all the churches of Christ in the land, with some of which it has most intimate connections, and with which it may be, ere long, joined in a communion alike profitable and delightful to all, and advantageous to the Lord's cause throughout the world. I shall confine my observations to facts and principles, without determinately indicating their application to the circumstances in which a difference of judgment may be expected in any matters of importance to arise.

And here, in appearing before you, and with reference to the great objects of endeavour and enterprise set before our Church, I cannot but briefly recal to our remembrance the distinguished part which our beloved country,—so limited in its dimensions, population, and resources, compared with many other lands of the globe,—has taken in the reception, propagation, and conservation of the blessed gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This I shall do with the desire that, to some extent, we may transfer the lessons of the past to the present time, and that we may feel encouragement in our maintenance of God's truth, and in our varied enterprises for its diffusion to the ends of the earth.

1. To the special favour of God, manifested in most remarkable providences, has Scotland been indebted, from very early times, for its religious privileges and advantages. From Eastern navigators and merchants, Roman soldiers, and fugitives from persecution, our beloved native country, like England, probably first derived the incipiency of its conver-

sion to Christianity. This blessing which, in the grace of God, it received, it speedily gave, to a remarkable extent, to other lands. One of its sons, dubiously held by some to have been born at Kilpatrick on the banks of the Clyde, became, as is so well known, the apostle of Ireland, ultimately getting the name of St Patrick, by which he is known both in history and romance. The fruits of his labours were permanent and expansive. Nearly two centuries after him, Columba, a member of one of the collegiate institutions founded by him, cast an eye of compassion on Scotland, the land of Patrick's birth, and with suitable evangelistic companions, steered for it in a very tiny bark about the year 565. They made the islet of Iona, their headquarters, a propagandist institution, in which character it became distinguished, contributing largely by its alumni, and those of Bangor in Ireland, with which it was allied, to the conversion of Scots, Picts, and Britons, while maintaining its own Christianity and church order in very considerable simplicity, purity, and independence of unwarranted foreign domination. While these missionaries did not neglect the Saxons in their neighbourhood and to the south, they did very much for the spread of the truth on the Continent of Europe. It strikes me that in thus operating they were, in the first instance, guided by lingual affinity. It is certain that they found the Celtic language which they spoke to be cognate with the languages of Gaul, Helvetia (now Switzerland), and the north of Italy, where the Cisalpine Gauls of the Romans were seated. Columbanus, the chief of their foreign missionaries, with fellow-labourers both from Bangor and Iona, set out for the Continent about the year 590. He effected much in Gaul and Helvetia, but his ultimate destination was the north of Italy. The village *Colubano*, in Lombardy, which has been long overlooked, bears his own name; and by him and his companions was founded the *Cœnobium*, or *Bobbio*, whose large literary remains, in the Celtic or Irish language, are still extant, as is known, principally at Turin, and in the Ambrosial Library at Milan, where they have lately attracted the attention of such an accomplished Celtic scholar and

antiquarian as Mr W. Stokes, of the Indian Civil Service. Columbanus propagated the doctrines and observances of the Iona missionaries in the places of his settlement; and he boldly maintained them in his correspondence with Pope Boniface the Fourth, in whom certainly he saw no personal or official infallibility, for, instead of slavishly submitting to that ecclesiastic, he unhesitatingly called upon him to administer the affairs of the church according to truth and strict reason (*recta ratio*). It is rather to be wondered at, I think, that his position and that of his companions and successors in the north of Italy have been so much overlooked. The Scotch and Irish missionaries did much for the conversion of the Germans, as well as the Gauls. With reference to this matter, the learned historian of the Reformation (Dr Merle D'Aubigné) justly says, "The free church of the Scots and the Britons did more for the conversion of Central Europe than the half-enslaved church of the Romans." Their zeal and perseverance testified to both light and warmth at the centre of their influence.

2. Most interesting it is, too, for us to remember that, to use the quaint words of John Knox, "Mercifullie God hath looked upoun this Realme, reteanyng within it some sponk of his light, evin in the time of grettast darkness." The light of the Culdees (*cultores Dei*, or in Celtic *Gille Dé*, or servants of God, as suggested by Dr M'Lauchlan, who has thrown great light on the early history of the Scottish Church), was not fully quenched till that of Wicliff and the Lollards, the harbingers of the Reformation in Britain,—exemplified in the case of the Lollards of Kyle in Ayrshire, noticed by Knox, —began to dawn. This Reformation, begun in power on the Continent by the fervent and courageous Luther, had soon its adherents in Scotland. The funeral pyres of our own martyrs of the Reformation lighted up the moral atmosphere around them, and directed the attention of many to the truth of God. The year following the execution of the last of them, the aged and venerable Mill, who was burned on the 28th August 1558, Knox,—who had had to leave Scotland for the testimony of Jesus, and who had much intercommunion in

conference and work with the Reformers in England and on the Continent, particularly with those of Switzerland, and especially Calvin,—reappeared on the scene, with something like the might, though not with the inspired guidance, of an ancient prophet. We all know the result, as so laboriously and accurately related by the noble M'Crie; but let it be noticed in passing, in the words of a member of the sister Church of England, the good and learned Bishop Jewell, who, with many others of his communion, evidently much sympathised with Knox, and gloried in all that was done by him and his followers, even when the questionable element of violence was not wanting in some of their proceedings:—"Everything is in a ferment in Scotland. Knox [arrived from France, May 2. 1559], surrounded by a thousand followers, is holding assemblies throughout the whole kingdom. The old queen has been obliged to shut herself up in garrison. The nobility, with united hearts and hands, are restoring religion throughout the country, in spite of all opposition. All the monasteries are everywhere levelled with the ground; the theatrical dresses ("*vestes scenicæ*," elsewhere called by Jewell "*vestes saltem comicæ*," "*reliquæ Amorhæorum*"), the sacrilegious chalices, the idols, the altars, are consigned to the flames. Not a vestige of the ancient superstition and idolatry is left." On the further history of our Reformation,—of the first Parliament which favoured that Reformation, of the first Confession of Faith acknowledged by Parliament, of the first General Assembly in 1560, of the composition and ratification by the Church of the First and Second Books of Discipline, of the recognition and support of the Protestant movement by the State, which also acknowledged and ratified the earliest of the Books of Discipline now mentioned, and of the difficulties encountered and overcome in the reign of Mary of Scotland,—I need not dwell. Suffice it to say, that the reform advanced by the blessing of God. In 1580–81, under James, the son of Mary, it reached its highest point, as directed against the assumption and presumption of the Romish papacy, as it then appeared. This was the era of the first National Covenant of Scotland,

signed by his Majesty and household, and the peers and people of the land. On opening the scroll, so interesting in a historical point of view, and comparing it with the documents already mentioned, what do we in substance see and find? Here we have the word of God elevated to its own celestial sphere; exhibited as a safe, unerring, and sufficient guide in all matters of doctrine, instruction, and practice; claiming translation into the living languages of the earth; and distinguished from apocryphal and all other writings of merely human origin. Here we have the sin of man, as opposition to the moral government of God, viewed in its guilt and heinousness, without any distinctions as mortal and venial detracting from the majesty of the Divine law, and without any ability of popes, priests, or churches to put it away, or modify it in its character by dispensations, absolutions, or penances. Here we have justification before God, represented as effected by faith only,—by faith laying hold of an all-sufficient Saviour, who has satisfied the claims of Divine justice on his redeemed people. Here we have the necessity recognised of a complete sanctification effected by the word and Spirit of God, and declared to be perfected at death, without any purgatorial fires in regions unknown to the Bible. Here we have a ministry for the church and work of Christ recognised, with simply the functions of service spoken of in the New Testament, and free from all claims to sacerdotalism, ecclesiastical lordship, or magistracy. Here we have the sacraments reduced to their scriptural number, and viewed merely as divinely instituted exhibitory signs of the person and sacrificial work and influence of Christ, and seals or confirmations to right recipients of the righteousness of faith in him, and without an idolatrous mass, magical transubstantiation, or pretended and invisible *opus operatum*. Here we have a solemn and spiritual worship of God in intelligible languages, without images for worship or assistance in worship, without the invocation of saints or angels (unable to hear or help their votaries, having neither the omniscience nor omnipotence of God), and without any unwarranted or superstitious and distractive symbols, usages,

or practices. Here we have maintained Christian liberty, as it affects the consciences of men, in conformity with the word of God. Here we have a comprehensive reform extended to the requisitions of the whole body of revelation, and the deductions which it warrants, and limited by that body of revelation. Here we have a recognition of the solemn obligations and engagements under which that reform placed the "lively members" of the church "in Christ their head." On these principles we have still lovingly but faithfully to act, in all our attempts to enlighten, and to convert to the simple and pure truth as it is in Jesus, the members of the Romish and Eastern and other churches, which have so fatally erred, by their deference to the ambition, inventions, and traditions of men.

3. We have to praise God for the initial order of the visible Church of Christ in Scotland at the time of the Reformation, with regard to its own constitution and administration, and the aid which, in the first instance, it received from the State. Our Reformers sought, in conformity with their deference to the authority of the Bible, to be guided solely by its principles, precepts, and precedents. The views which led them to adopt the actual Presbyterian organisation which they did, as appears from their own documents and proceedings, were such as the following:—The real and comprehensive church of Christ on earth, at any particular period of time, consists of the whole body of the then existing believers and actual participants of the blessings bestowed by Christ. The definite line of its demarcation from the world is not known to man, though known to God. The word "church," literally meaning an "assembly," viewed with reference to a visibility founded on profession, is applied to a body of believers, small or great, holding Christian communion, and worshipping God with one another according to his word. In the New Testament we read of the church which was in the house of Aquila and Priscilla; of local churches forming ordinary congregations of God's people, such as are everywhere to be seen among ourselves; of churches with a plurality of bishops or overseers, and elders, and not able, from the numbers of their members,

to meet together in one place, as the Church of Jerusalem and the Church of Ephesus; of churches, though remote from one another, taking counsel together, by their deputies, founders, and office-bearers, about emergencies which had arisen in connection with the Christian enterprise, as the Church of Antioch and the Church of Jerusalem, which issued, even to other churches, "decrees" or findings of their deliberative assemblies, suited to these emergencies; of "helps" and "governments" established in the churches by God himself; and of the "Presbytery," or body of a particular eldership, united in the solemn act of the ordination of one called by God to evangelistic labour. Our Reformers recognised the fundamental principle of Presbyterianism, in a brotherhood in church officers, and a communion in Christian congregations, founded on their common interests and common obligations to maintain and to propagate the religion of Jesus. All practical communion, co-operation, and united administration, they saw to be incumbent on the body of believers in Scotland, duly represented. In the organisation of the church in this land, they were doubtless influenced to a certain extent by the views of Calvin, the most learned and considerate of all the reformers on the Continent, but to him only in as far as he pointed to an authorisation found in the word of God. One of the coadjutors of Knox, in framing the First Book of Discipline and the Confession, approved by the General Assembly in 1561, thus wrote, that "they took not their example from any kirk in the world, no, not from Geneva, but drew their plan from the sacred Scriptures." In doing this, they were not without encouragement from the admissions of the Fathers of the church contiguous to the apostolic age,—admissions made even when these Fathers were, both in doctrine and practice, in many respects neglecting the teachings and testimony of the divine word. What the admissions to which I now refer actually were, may be conveniently seen in the learned, able, and exhaustive work, entitled, "Whose are the Fathers?" by the Rev. Dr John Harrison, vicar of Fenwick, who has just received his degree from the University of Edinburgh. The conclusions

to be made from that work need not be curtailed by a comparison of it with another able work, entitled, "The Church and the Age," written from an entirely different point of view, though generally in a spirit of moderation, by several other learned divines and members of the Church of England. It is well for us to remember, that in no matter of importance are we required to abandon the ground occupied by our ancestors at the time of the Reformation, who laid the foundations of our Reformed church by the simple preaching of the divine word, and the administration of the ordinances of the New Testament. They were aided at this time by the Estates of the Realm, which, in deference to the call of the nobles and people of Scotland, passed several Acts recognising their work, revoking all laws which acknowledged the jurisdiction of the Pope in Scotland, and conferring upon the ministers of the Reformed church such a portion of the ecclesiastical property of the country as was needful for their decent support, with the reservation of the remainder for the promotion of education and the relief of the poor, and other less commendable objects. In the procedure, both of the Church and of the State, there was undoubtedly a certain amount of intolerance, though not of that persecution, even unto death, which had usually been practised by the Romanists. It is to the undying credit of the Reformers, that the independent autonomy of their church under Christ was professed and maintained by them, notwithstanding all the attempts made to encroach upon that autonomy,—in the first instance by Mary of Scotland, and afterwards by her son James the Sixth, and his successors.

4. We have devoutly to acknowledge the providence of God in raising up instruments in our land for vindicating our Presbyterian polity and liberties, and raising up qualified agents for continuing the work of Reformation, and effecting a second one, when the attempts made to interfere with, and pervert, the government of the church, by designing men, could no longer be tolerated. The names of Andrew Melville, Bruce, Henderson, and others, must ever be dear to our Scottish hearts. The General Assembly of 1638, in which

Henderson took such a prominent part, amply maintained the spiritual independence of the Church, vindicated its constitution, worship, and discipline, and advanced its evangelistic efficiency. Notwithstanding the vigour of its proceedings under its leader on that occasion, there was no lack of charity on his part, as abundantly testified by the recognition which he made of the Church of England, as a "true Church." It was really what we call the "Second Reformation" which prepared the way for our consociation with the Puritans of England.

5. It is in connection with our "Confession of Faith" that we are most indebted to the alliance here referred to. The draft of that Confession, as far as England was concerned, was not, strictly speaking, of organic ecclesiastical origin. It was the work of a commission of pious and learned divines, appointed by the Long Parliament, who were assisted by commissioners appointed by the Church of Scotland. While it was offered to Parliament by those who framed it merely as "*An Humble Advice* as to a Confession of Faith," it was taken up by the Church of Scotland on its own merits. It is interesting to observe the proceedings of the General Assembly on the occasion. It received the Confession simply as "found by the Assembly to be most agreeable to the word of God, and in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Kirk," and a bond of union and uniformity between the two kingdoms; while at the same time (limiting the calling of synods by the civil Magistrate for consultation to churches not settled) it held itself to be "free to assemble together synodically, as well *pro re nata* as at the ordinary times, upon delegation from the churches, by the intrinsical power received from Christ, as often as it is necessary for the good of the Church so to assemble, in case the Magistrate, to the detriment of the Church, withhold his consent." The Confession of Faith was recognised by the civil power in Scotland. This did not add to its authority, but it gave facilities for its use in legal administration. It is a comprehensive, full, and invaluable exhibition of Christian doctrine, supported by quotations,

in proof, from the Word of God. As the older testimonies of the Church were directed principally against popery, it is directed against all forms of heresy and unbelief, particularly against scepticism (absolute and modified), polytheism, pantheism, anti-trinitarianism, Pelagianism, and Arminianism; and, though capable of improvement in its tone and expression in some instances, it needs neither modification nor curtailment in a doctrinal point of view. To the question, "What is Christianity?" we Presbyterians of different denominations adhering to it, can give a united and unequivocal answer. With us Christianity is not a religious elaboration of the human mind, dealing under the suggestions of a great master, with its own consciousness, intuitions, and deductions from the world within or without, and seeking the development, improvement, and advancement of the individual man or human society. It is not, as many suppose, merely an effective remedy for a curable moral disease, offered to and pressed on our acceptance by a teacher, exemplar, and physician, of supereminent endowments, wisdom, and skill. It is not a mere course of direct revelation, communicated when the human family and the church of God needed initiative instruction, and duly corroborated and authenticated by evidence external and internal, though in such an acceptable and trustworthy revelation it is actually presented to our view. In a comprehensive sense, it is the whole system of the jurisprudence and work of God connected with man, while vindicating, as the source and head of moral government, the authority and stability of his own law, and harmonising, before the intelligent universe, with his own holiness, justice, and sovereignty, his grace and mercy in the gift of his Son, to the intent that he who believeth in him, "should not perish, but have everlasting life." It deals with man, individually and universally, as he is manifestly found by his own consciousness, the observation of his fellows, and the testimony of the Bible, as a guilty, fallen, and depraved being. It is the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation. It brings with it the declaration and communication by God of a full remission of

sin and absolution from condemnation, in virtue of the incarnation and work of Christ, who has made satisfaction to the law and justice of God, by honouring it with perfect obedience after it had been opposed and violated by man, and by consenting to be sin for us" (or treated as "sin for us"); "who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It is life to its believing recipients resting on Christ, though it finds them in the first instance dead,—dead judicially, as the violators of God's law in a capital sense, and dead morally, by the blindness and insensibility of their souls to the spiritual perception and appreciation of the moral glory of their Creator, and to the enjoyment to be found in the light of his approving countenance and communicated favour and grace. It brings with it enlightenment, renewal, sanctification, and glory, by the Spirit of God, the gift of the exalted Saviour. In it there are both the reconciliation of God to man, so fatally overlooked by many in our day, and the reconciliation of man to God. It brings with it, through the operation of the Holy Spirit bestowed by the exalted Saviour, joy, purity, and consecration to the service and enjoyment of God. It accomplishes more than the recovery and re-establishment of its recipients from the consequences of the grand apostasy. It effects the objects announced by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." If we depart from these views so clearly unfolded in the sacred Scriptures, and set forth in our subordinate standards founded on these Scriptures, we manifestly depart from the "truth as it is in Jesus." No rationalistic or latitudinarian processes are needed, or are to be tolerated, in our entertainment of them, considering the authority on which they rest, and their divine adaptation to our judicial and moral position before the Judge of all. We must ever hold them for ourselves, and hold them forth to our fellow-men. Christianity really advances in the world only when the evangelical truths to which we refer are propagated and received, though tendencies to good occur in the providence of God, from its direct and indirect influences on individuals and communities throughout

that world. In the view of the outstanding promises of the divine word, and of the exaltation of the Saviour, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, I believe that it is destined to pervade human society in its universal relationships.

6. Referring back to the restoration of monarchy under Charles the Second, and the political and religious changes which occurred at that time, and during the whole of the troubled reign of the last of the Stuarts, we must praise God that, though the Presbyterian church received only an intolerant and traitorous treatment from the State, it nevertheless sought to be faithful to the spirit of its founders. During this period there was a projection and intrusion into our church of many ministers who did not receive its principles or observe its practices, followed by a depravation of a not inconsiderable number of those who ministered with them in united communion. Yet the Lord did not leave himself without a witness in those days of oppression and degeneracy. Men of holy life and abundant labour were known in the Church, and more particularly in that portion of it which was in the fields. The confessorial and martyr spirit of Scotland was not extinct. Some eighteen thousands of them, under various perversions of law and appliances of force, sealed their testimony with their lives. The glorious Revolution (under William and Mary) arrived, and Presbytery was restored in all its functions,—if not entirely to the satisfaction of all its adherents, yet to the extent of the concurrence of a majority of its members. The Act of 1669, of Charles II., which maintained "his Majesty's supremacy over all persons, and in all causes ecclesiastical," was then repealed. Presbyterian ministers were restored, to be succeeded by others duly elected by the Christian people, and duly tried by the presbyteries according to order. The Presbyterian Church, with the Westminster Confession of Faith as its declarative standard, was re-established. There was, however, a minority of the people which did not fall in with these arrangements. For the dissentients, represented by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, I am sure, we must all entertain the greatest respect. We are probably more indebted to them for the preservation of our Scottish

martyrology, than to any other class of Presbyterians. They held and maintained the principle, which is incontrovertible (whatever use may at any time have been made of it), that in forming an alliance with the State, we ought to look to the character, temper, and aims of the State, and, to its intromissions with the people under its civil charge, and their disposition to concur with it in the disposal of national resources, more than simply to the endowments which it may propose to offer. Their conduct was in some respects analogous to our own at the Disruption.

7. We have to thank and praise God that when the Revolution settlement, notwithstanding the guarantees given at the union of England and Scotland, was violated by the passing of the Act establishing Patronage in the reign of Queen Anne, and the gradual enforcement of that Act by some of our Presbyteries, contrary to the wishes of a reclaiming people, and their rights as to a call, there were not wanting faithful ministers and elders to contend against this abuse of civil and ecclesiastic power. Among these faithful men there were two classes of upholders of the privileges of our Christian people. One of these, led by Ebenezer Erskine and his associates, under protest, left the Church as established by law, and the other remained within its communion. Looking at them with that impartiality with which we regard the history of the Church of Christ in general, we cannot but acknowledge that the blessing of the Lord has conspicuously rested on both of them. The founders of what were called the Secession and Relief Churches, though at first few in number, were as lights shining in dark places. Their successors in the ministry have steadily increased, so much so, that at present they are upwards of six hundred in number. They have contributed largely and efficiently to the evangelical instruction of almost every district in Scotland. They have ever proved faithful maintainers of scriptural orthodoxy, whatever views they may of late years have held of the expediency or non-expediency of ecclesiastical establishments supported by the State. The evangelical ministers, elders, and people who remained in the Establishment, to work on the con-

stitutional footing on which they there stood, also experienced the blessing of the Lord. Even striking revivals of religion followed the ministrations of some of their numbers,—revivals of which a few of the Seceders at first felt greatly in doubt, as the able and determined Adam Gib, who declared that the Church of Scotland only "went forward in a backsliding course." All earnest religious parties in Scotland, as in England, were aided by what may be called the evangelistic era, which originated in influences of which no single evangelical denomination had a monopoly. It was that of our Missionary, Bible, and other Christian enterprises, both stationary and itinerative, which awakened great attention to the claims of the ignorant and long-neglected at home, as well as to those of the Gentiles abroad. In effecting the commencement of that era, Scotchmen as well as Englishmen had much to do. It was Scotland which, through its Incorporated Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, maintained the apostolic David Brainerd and his successors among the Indians of the American wilderness. It was in the bosom of the Scottish Church that Dr Bogue, who first moved for the forming of the London Missionary Society, which gave such a powerful impetus to the cause of Protestant Missions, was reared, though he was ministering among our respected brethren, the Congregationalists of England, when he sent forth the call which led to its formation. In that formation of "The Missionary Society," our own godly Dr Love, its first secretary, and the devout and gentle Dr Waugh of the Secession, who penned its fundamental principle, as well as Dr Haweis of the Episcopal Church, who pleaded the claims of the South Sea Islands discovered by Cook, and several others, particularly Non-conformists, took special part. The voice of Carey and Marshman, sent abroad by the Baptists, was heard from the banks of the Ganges, by the Haldanes and other devoted Scotchmen, who awakened attention by the ready response which they were prepared to grant it, had not the Government of India of the day timidly intervened to prevent the accomplishment of their wishes. A gradual increase of able and faithful ministers became

apparent in the Establishment, as elsewhere. Under the leadership of such godly and greatly endowed men in the Establishment as Dr John Erskine, Sir Henry Moncreiff, Dr Andrew Thomson, Dr Chalmers, and others (some of whom are still with us in the mercy of God), not to overlook the orthodox and zealous members of another party, evangelical religion became triumphant in the Church. The Ten Years' Conflict in behalf of the guaranteed spiritual independence of the Church, and constitutional privileges of its members, was then waged, with unanswerable power. The claim of the rights of the Church was unheard by the British Courts and the British Legislature, and the exodus and the organisation of the Free Church followed.

8. Since the era of the Reformation, nothing has occurred in the religious history of Scotland so impressive and important, and so much demanding our acknowledgment of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, as the formation and advancement of the Free Church. It is obviously, in every respect, a striking success. The methods and results of its finance, as so luminously and ably stated by Dr Robert Buchanan in his most interesting paper, lately read before the Statistical Society of London, must secure the attention and excite the surprise of the political economist, as well as of the ecclesiastic and philevangelist seeking to discover the best way of supporting the Christian Church, not merely embracing within its agency the whole of Scotland, but extending its enterprise to the very ends of the earth. The raising from May 1843 to April 1869, of the sum of £8,487,774, for the purposes of our Church, is, considering the limited wealth of Scotland, unexampled in the history of Christian liberality. I am happy to say that, as I have been informed by Mr Meldrum, we had last year £6000 more than in the previous year, raising the total for the year to £427,621, 18s. 10d, and the grand total to the close of March last, to £8,915,395, 18s. 10d. What an encouragement does it not afford to all the people of God to rely on the resources which they themselves may provide, independently of all exterior influences and supplies, especially when they recognise in the Church the

authority solely of the Lord Jesus Christ, and determine to follow the leadings of his all-wise and to his people all-gracious providence! The destination of the offerings of the Church is not less gratifying than their amount. Our people have supported, over the whole extent of our native country, an able, a faithful, and a laborious ministry, which is already of double the magnitude of that which belonged to the Free Church on its separation from the Establishment. They have afforded the means, wherever needed, of erecting decent, convenient, and recognisable fabrics for the worship of God. They have stimulated efforts for upholding a school establishment, similar to that maintained on our old and admired parochial system. By them have been founded, and nearly completely endowed, three theological colleges, with a staff of professors probably more complete and efficient than is to be seen anywhere else in our native isles. They have assisted in sending four hundred ministers to the British Colonies, where they supply the wants of most respectable congregations scattered over the whole extent of these colonies. They have assisted the Presbyterian Church in England in its efforts to meet the spiritual exigencies of our countrymen who cross the Tweed, and to advance that evangelistic work which is peculiarly required by the untoward and backward influences which largely prevail to the south. They have aided the enterprises of evangelistic churches and societies on the Continent of Europe, as well as furnished a ministry for our countrymen there engaged in business, or seeking health or recreation. They have maintained a mission establishment for the Israelites of Europe (I wish they had united the East with the West in this endeavour to commend the Messiah to those who are beloved for their fathers' sakes). And, not to speak further of the smaller endeavours made by them to proclaim the glorious gospel of the Saviour, they have supported most vigorous and efficient missions in the vast and inviting fields of India and Africa. All these beginnings and endeavours are of a most hopeful and encouraging kind, though they doubtless require a vast expansion. Most inspiriting is the passage of Scripture selected as a motto for

the Confession of Faith of 1560 :—"And this glaid tydingis of the kyngdome sall be precheit through the haill warld for a witnes unto all natiouns, and then sall the end cum." Let us ever act in the spirit of the evangelistic determination here indicated, resting on the grace and seeking the blessing of God. While we call upon all Christians and Christian Churches to come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty, let us realise our own providential astrictment from the days of old, to do our best for the extension of that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Looking, we may suppose, to that providential astrictment as it appears in the thorough espousal of the cause of Christ by Scotland at the time of the Reformation, in the precious blood which was shed for the name of Jesus by our ancestors, and to the union and concord appearing in his day, the celebrated Cotton Mather of America exclaimed, "In the mean time North Britain will be distinguished (pardon me if I use the term Goshenised), by irradiations from heaven upon it of such a tendency. There will be found a set of men in that reformed and renowned Church of Scotland, with whom the most refined and extensive essays to do good will become so natural that the whole world will fare the better for them." The reference made to this ardent anticipation leads me to express the hope, that soon, in furtherance of the result so greatly to be longed for, there will be only one Reformed Church of Scotland, united in the truth and love of Him who, immediately before his last sufferings, prayed for those whom his Father had given to Him, that they might be all one in Him and in the Father.

But I must draw these general remarks to a close ; and, in conclusion, notice some occurrences among ourselves and around us which have attracted attention during the past year.

The business of some of our subordinate Church Courts introductory to this Assembly, has not been altogether characterised by that perfect harmony which has hitherto prevailed in the deliberations of the Free Church. I fondly

hope, nay, I firmly believe, that at the meetings now before us there will be no remembrance either of offence given or offence taken, but for the purpose of its entire avoidance. The prayer-meetings which have been held, and the supplications which have been presented to the Great Head of the Church, and our confidence in the exemplary Christian character of the members of the Assembly, are the foundations of this hope. The form and spirit of the procedure of our Church in all cases of appeal, report, inquiry, deliberation, and action, are so well known and universally respected, that it is difficult to imagine that they will be in any degree departed from on this occasion.

The question of National Education in the British Isles, which has received much attention for several years, appears scarcely nearer solution in parliament than it seemed twelve months ago. The wants of the country can be adequately met only by a national provision on a large scale. To the secular tuition which may easily be thus furnished, Christian instruction must be added, as indispensably necessary for the highest objects of education, considered with reference to the life which now is and that which is to come. The fixing of the way in which this religious instruction is to be communicated constitutes the "educational difficulty." Some of the religious denominations apprehend that unworthy applications may be made of this instruction for sectarian purposes. One arrangement promotive to a certain extent of religious instruction, one would think, can easily be made: let a portion of the Bible, as proposed by Earl Russell, be daily read in schools without comment. It would be strange if there were any general objection to the use in this way of the Bible as a national school-book, while the great majority of our people hold that the Bible is divine, which they certainly do not do in the case of any other book which may be used. Let the parents and representatives of children who may object even to this use of the Bible, get their children exempted on application from attendance at any public Bible class which may be formed. Among these objectors would probably be found considerable numbers of Roman Catholics, desirous of

having the power of conveying religious instruction of a different character to their youth at the public expense. Respecting them it must be borne in mind, that the Protestantism of the country, even when conceding to Roman Catholics the utmost religious liberty, will not consent to the application of the resources of the country to tuition in what it believes to be religious error. A vastly more extended system of religious instruction, however, than that implied in the simple public perusal of the Bible as referred to is needful; but for this we must look, in the circumstances of the country, to arrangements to be approved of by the parents and representatives of the children under instruction, with such help as they may receive from their own churches, ministers, and other sources. Christian zeal, wisdom, and patriotism, are needful to effect these arrangements.

The passing of an Act of Parliament legalising a class of marriages repugnant to the feelings of Christians in this country, and decidedly opposed to our interpretation of the indications of the Bible, seems to be threatened. The most strenuous opposition to such a law should continue to be offered by the Churches of Scotland. Whatever the decision of Parliament may be in the case, the testimony and action of our churches regarding it must continue unchanged, or the consequences will be much to be regretted. We have only to maintain the ground taken respecting it at our last and former Assemblies.

The Bill for the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church in Ireland, and the withdrawal of the *regium donum* from our brethren of the Presbyterian Church of that country, which passed the legislature since last Assembly, has caused much discussion among the parties more immediately affected by that Bill. There are always difficulties connected with great and important religious changes; and those who encounter these difficulties, and who believe that they are injured by them, are entitled to sincere and respectful sympathy. Such sympathy, I am sure, we extend to our Protestant brethren in Ireland, even though many of us may believe that the changes by which they have been affected have been manifestly expedient. As

Free Churchmen, we must, at the same time, congratulate the members of the Irish Episcopal Church on account of the spiritual independence which they now enjoy, and pray that they may be so directed by God that they may agree together to found for themselves such a system of church administration as shall respect alike the privileges and functions of church members and church office-bearers to whatever class they may belong, as warranted by the Bible. Our brethren of the Presbyterian Church have no question of a constitutional character to attend to in their present circumstances. Their Presbyterianism, which from first to last has been of the genuine type, is unaffected by the deprivation of the small public endowment by the State, which they have been required to abandon. For their deprivation of that portion of the income of their ministers which they had long enjoyed, the zeal and liberality of their members seems to be making ample compensation. If it were found needful, they are certainly entitled to look for such assistance from Scotland, as they cheerfully and effectively rendered to the Sustentation Fund of our own Church, when our exodus from the Establishment took place.

Looking to the Episcopal Church of England, in the prosperity of which we are all deeply interested, we must greatly regret the continued existence within its communion of a party more conspicuous for non-belief than belief in a Christian and Biblical sense, and of another which practises ritualistic and æsthetical observances totally repugnant to the principles of the Reformation. The invention and use in the worship of God of symbols not sanctioned and guarded by divine revelation, always appears to me to have a direct idolatrous tendency, such as I see exemplified among certain classes of the Gentiles of India. Even of that simple æsthetic feeling which is associated with the more cognisable of the fine arts, whether of architecture, sculpture, or painting (which are all well in their own place, and which it would be barbarous to depreciate), I am more than jealous, when it is associated with the direct worship of God. Well has a member of this Church, in distant India (of exquisite taste and performance in Art), said

of one of the most wonderful erections in the world, the *Táj*, or imperial "crown" of architecture, at Agra:—"Here a Muhammadan building excites in the highest degree those emotions of rapture which, by a natural transition, melt into the spurious poetic devotion which is aroused by the 'long-drawn aisles' and 'dim religious light' of an ancient cathedral. This shews that these feelings are purely natural. A heathen can feel them—a Muhammadan architect or an infidel poet can excite them; therefore they have no claim to be considered as Christian or as religious feelings at all, in any other sense than as springing from those tendencies to wonder and reverence which are implanted in every one who has a heart. Rightly did our Presbyterian forefathers act in stripping the worship of God of all that could delude the worshipper, by exciting those poetic emotions which too often pass current with those who experience them for the true devotion of the heart to that God who dwelleth not in temples made with hands." The spirit of these remarks appears to me applicable also to the musical extravagances which, in certain congregations of worshippers, are now in vogue, and even to much that is found in liturgical services, conducted in the spirit of ceremony, with the subordination of heartfelt spiritual devotion.

I think that it is with pleasure that we must notice the advance of associations and meetings for deliberation and common action which are making progress among the Nonconformists of England, whose forms of worship and doctrinal teachings are similar to our own. Our systems of church-management are thus practically approximating. The Calvinistic Methodists in Wales, whom we regard with very special interest, have of late years adopted the designation of "Presbyterian," to which they are well entitled. The Methodists of England, who have done so much for the evangelisation of the masses of South Britain, have an organisation and systematic conference most animating and encouraging to their whole body. The English Presbyterian Churches are visibly expanding from month to month, to the great satisfaction of those who seek the guarantee of a declared and

respected creed and a duly constituted system of Church administration by ministers and elders duly elected and tried before their appointment to public office in the Church.

With special interest we must contemplate the re-union of the great Presbyterian Churches of America, which was suitably noticed by anticipation in last Assembly. The deputies whom we have sent to their General Assembly will adequately express the feelings of our hearts in connection with this occurrence, which, we pray, may be followed by a rich blessing on the Continent of America, and its great mission-fields in distant parts of the world. The Presbyterian bodies which remain separate from one another without due reason are doing injustice to themselves and the cause of their common Christianity.

The so-called Œcumenical Council which is now being held at Rome, has attracted great attention throughout the world. Even as a Romish Council it presents many surprising anomalies. On these, however, we have not to comment. It has been called, we may be certain, not for the purpose of reforming the Romish Church, but for the purpose of strengthening the Papacy. In this view of it, it is greatly disliked by multitudes of Roman Catholics in the different countries of Europe, who, whatever their views of religion may be, have no sympathy with that pontifical system and its opposition to the progress of society, and of that liberty, without licentiousness and without disorder, which they desire to advance. The Council should continue to be strictly watched by Protestants, who, if it should sanction the Syllabus, proclaim the doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin, or decree the personal Infallibility of the Pope, as it is expected to do, will undoubtedly raise, with louder voice than ever, the solemn cry, "Come out of her my people." The progress of religious liberty and toleration in Europe permits of more extended efforts than ever, being made in Catholic countries for the proclamation of the truth of God, and the exposure of the aberrations of man. May the word of God have free course and be glorified in every land of the globe.

Solemn admonitions to abound in the work of the Lord

are, from year to year, given to us, by the removal from this earthly scene of many around us who have been distinguished by their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father. The losses which our Church has, during the past year, suffered in this respect are very notable. Four diligent and faithful servants of God, as intimated in the interesting notices taken of them in the *Monthly Record* of the Church, died during the sitting of the last General Assembly,—Mr YOUNG of Kilmarnock, Mr M'GILLIVRAY of Keith, Mr MACBEAN of Fort Augustus, and Dr M'CRACKEN of Symington. Within a week of the rising of the Assembly died Mr MACKENZIE of Dunfermline, distinguished, not merely for pulpit and pastoral excellence, but for literary accomplishments and success in authorship, as noted in his popular History of Scotland and other books for the young, and in his appropriate editing of the *Monthly Record,* in which the warm sympathy of his heart with every evangelistic effort was clearly apparent. Mr AITKEN, an earnest and acceptable servant of Christ, died at an advanced age on the 20th of June. Mr BUCHAN, of Hamilton, died on the following day. I well remember him as a most eager and successful student, and a determined adherent to evangelical truth before he obtained licence as a preacher. His whole subsequent action in the Church, both in his own congregation and wherever he went, was marked by a power and vigour appreciated by many. Mr FAIRWEATHER, of Botriphnie, a sound and well-instructed theologian and self-denied minister, died a few days after. The venerable Mr FINDLATER, of Durness, well known as a man of piety and precious gifts, died in his eighty-sixth year on the 29th June. Mr JACKSON, of Airdrie, was suddenly called from his abundant work to his reward on the 8th August. Professor SACHS, of Aberdeen, an Israelite converted through the instrumentality of the late Dr John Brown, of the United Presbyterian Church, by whose biblical erudition he was greatly attracted, died on the 29th September. He was an admirable Hebrew scholar and teacher. Of Mr JAMESON, of Pathhead, who died on the 1st

of February, an interesting notice by Mr Couper, of Burntisland, dwelling on his excellent Christian character and work, appears in the last number of our *Record*. Of the death of Mr MACLEOD, of Rogart, and Mr STARK, of Lanark, I have seen only the bare announcement. Dr Macfarlane, of Dalkeith, has given a striking notice of the peculiar worth of Mr LORIMER, of Cockenzie, who died on the 23d December last. A similar service has been done to the most pleasing memory of Mr MILLER, of Clunie, who died on the following day.

By the death of some of our other ministers who remain to be noticed, many besides our own members, and even the people of Scotland in general, have been deeply affected.

DR ROBERT BURNS, the founder of our Presbyterian Colonial Missions, and a most effective Professor in the Theological College of the Canadian Church, died at Toronto, in Canada, on the 8th of August last. Our Colonial Committee will doubtless pay a becoming tribute to his memory. He was long a distinguished preacher and model pastor at Paisley; the author of many able biographical, doctrinal, and critical articles in the "Edinburgh Christian Instructor;" and the laborious and learned editor of the invaluable Scottish Church History of Wodrow. It was the missionary spirit which carried him to the western world, and which sustained him in his zealous labours to raise up a Christian ministry for our Canadian fellow-religionists.

Dr JOHN DUNCAN died in February last. His fame as a remarkable monument of divine grace, a philosophical thinker of great acumen, an emphatic and weighty preacher, a general linguist, an expert in the Hebrew language and literature, sacred and Rabbinic, and well acquainted with the other Shemitic tongues, had reached, as I can testify, even the distant east while he was yet the pastor of Milton Church in Glasgow. All these qualifications for usefulness appeared to me to have found their appropriate sphere, when I had the high privilege of staying under his roof for a fortnight at Pesth in September 1843, and had the pleasure of listening to his ardent and ingenious religious conferences and discussions

with Jewish Rabbis and their wandering disciples, with the excellent Ministers of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, and with the literati of Hungary and Germany; and when I compared notes with him on modern discoveries in the lands of the Bible, and the development of the Israelitish and Muhammadan sects, and of the Gentile religions of India and Persia. I much regretted at the time the proposal being made for his transference to the Hebrew Chair in the New College, Edinburgh, though I believe that the Church at home, especially through the aspirants to its ministry, has greatly profited by his profound and apposite, though it may have been discursive tuition. His words of wisdom and of power will be long remembered by many.

Dr JAMES BUCHANAN, who was one of Dr Duncan's colleagues in the New College, followed him to the grave within a few weeks, dying on the 26th of April last. He was a most eloquent, impressive, and weighty preacher, attracting large congregations, both in North Leith and in the High Church of Edinburgh, where he was the colleague of the venerable and long-to-be-remembered Dr Robert Gordon. His ministrations in Free St Stephen's were appreciated like those of his early years. His treatises on Affliction, and other practical works, such as that on the Holy Spirit, have obtained a large circulation both in Britain and America, where they have been reprinted. His acquaintance with the literature of theology was extensive and accurate; and his own contributions to theology have been invaluable. A more able, satisfactory, and elaborate work than his on the Atheistic, Pantheistic, and Deistic controversies, entitled, "Faith in God," has not appeared in any language. It, too, has been reprinted in the Western hemisphere. His treatise on "Analogy," which is a suitable sequel to the volumes last mentioned, is entitled to the same high praise that they merit. His Cunningham lectures on "Justification" vindicate that cardinal doctrine of our holy faith in a way it has seldom, if at all, been done in modern times. It was justly said of his writings by Hugh Miller, that the great depth, which is one of their peculiarities, is scarcely realised on account of their lucidity.

His lectures as a professor of theology resembled his sermons in form, and were consequently profuser in style than the generality of academic prelections. He exemplified in his life the holy influence of the faith which he proclaimed and defended; and the last words which it is believed he uttered, were in a quiet remark to Mr Mackenzie, whose ministrations he usually attended, "The time long expected has now come." "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

To these many, and to perhaps other great ministerial losses during the past year of which I may be ignorant, have to be added those which have occurred in our respected and honoured eldership and membership, though our time will not permit me to refer to individual cases, except to mention the names of Mr GEORGE DALZIEL, W.S., Mr D. COWAN of Penicuik, Mr ROBERT BALFOUR, Mr GUNN of Latheron, Dr ANDREW ANDERSON of Glasgow, Mr TOWERS-CLARK, and Mr THOMAS ELDER, who all adorned the Christian profession, and rendered important services to the Church; and of the accomplished Mr D. O. HILL, of like character, whose highly artistic commemoration of the first General Assembly of the Free Church has met with so much acceptance. I would, in drawing to a close, however, allude to one of the members and communicants of our Church who has just been taken from ourselves; from the catholic church of Christendom; from our illustrious schools of surgery and medicine, both in and out of our greatest University; from our royal and scientific, literary, antiquarian, artistic, and benevolent societies; from the city of Edinburgh, which he adorned by his presence, and amplified by his fame, bringing pupils, and patients, and visitors to it from all the British Isles, and British Colonies, and other lands, seeking to profit by his wondrous skill and invention; and from the whole world, whose physical sufferings for the ages to come will be so greatly mitigated by his great discovery. As a gift of God to humanity, he is, in his work, still with us. His simple name (Sir JAMES SIMPSON) is his eulogy. In his case we have a fresh proof of the fact, that—

"Philosophy, baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *him* his praise and forfeits not her own."

It is our consolation, in the view of his death, that those who held intercourse with him for years past, and for the last few weeks of his life, had the sure conviction, founded on his simple, strong, and unwavering faith in the Redeemer, and in his love to His law, that when his flesh and heart were fainting and failing him, he felt that Jehovah was the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. To that God who gave him, and our Chalmerses and Brewsters, great like him in consecrated genius and science, and consecrated power and work, let us in faith look for a renewal of our blessings; and they will not be withheld from us as far as is consistent with God's own purposes, and with the manifestation of His own praise. The great Head of the Church is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He has received, and He bestows, diversified gifts for men. He has been seated, not merely on the holy hill of Zion, but on the throne on high, where all power has been given him in heaven and on earth. To Him the Eternal Father has said—

"Son of God, with God the same,
Enter Thine imperial dome.
Lo! the shaking heavens proclaim,
Mightiest Lord, Thy kingdom come!
Pomp or state dost Thou demand?
In Thy Father's glory shine;
Dost Thou ask for high command?
Lo! the Universe is Thine!"

He will provide agents for the accomplishment of His own work. For these agents we must look to Him, and for them we must give Him the praise when they are furnished.

Again thanking you, Fathers and Brethren, for the great kindness and honour you have bestowed upon me, I earnestly request an interest in your prayers, and beseech you to unite together in asking the blessing of God on all our deliberations while met together, in the name of Jesus, in this Assembly.

CLOSING ADDRESS.

31ST MAY 1870.

REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—I congratulate you on the conclusion of the business of this Assembly. In doing this, I cannot but express our deeply felt gratitude to God for the spirit of consideration, wisdom, and fraternal regard, with which all our proceedings have been conducted. The existence of a difference of judgment in some important matters which have come before us, and as to the course of action which should be pursued in connection with them, and the forcible and even vehement manner with which individual views of them have been set forth by the respective advocates of these views, have happily not made a rupture in that personal harmony and friendship which, as yet, have always been manifest in the General Assemblies of the Free Church of Scotland. Even a protest, which was laid on our table at the commencement of our discussions of a grave subject, was both tendered and received in a spirit creditable to all concerned. It was represented to be not of an offensive character by at least one of its supporters, highly respected by this Church for his Christian character and his multifarious services both at home and abroad. If sincerity and courage were shewn by the adherents to the protest, there were both sincerity and courage also exhibited by those whose procedure and conduct it was intended to affect. Its principal result, I believe, will be the maintenance of caution and consideration

in all directions throughout the Church, and especially now in our Presbyteries. It will, I think, neither retard nor expedite the conclusions at which the Church may arrive respecting Presbyterian union, desired, as appears from the discussions, either in an absolute or a substantial form, by the members of this Assembly on both sides of the House.

It has been to myself a great delight to find that there has not been a single case of discipline connected with doctrine, labour, or morals, to occupy the attention of the Assembly on this occasion. This speaks well for the character of our ministers, elders, and people. As an absentee from our beloved Scotland for the last twenty-three years, I may be allowed to add, without referring to such cases as that of the magnificent Chalmers, the man of an age in the Christian Church, that I cannot see any falling off either in the attainments or the power and application of our ministers during the last quarter of a century. The schools of our prophets, under their late and present learned and pious principals and professors, and the encouragements, by liberal endowments, both to teach and to study in them are, by the Divine blessing, more efficient than ever. A similar remark may be made respecting our universities, open in their professorships to candidates of all churches, under the well-devised and suitable statutes by which they are now regulated. I always seek to look on the literature of our country with an impartial eye; but I have no hesitation in saying, without any disparagement of other authors, that I know none to whose writings in the department of sacred literature and practical divinity greater importance is to be attached than to those who of late years and at the present time were or are in the bounds of the Free Church. The simple lists of the names of our ministers suggest, by association, the evidence on which this remark rests. The ordinary ministrations of our own and other ministers in Scotland are fitted for every class of society and condition of life. Perhaps this fact is too little thought of. It is the boast of some sister churches that only the varied orders of their clergy suit the exigencies of social life. But it is to be remembered that

Christian congregations are not generally constructed on the principle of high or low, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, young or old, forming, respectively, their individual constituency. These classes of society, unless in exceptional cases, are combined together in our congregations, which can call for their pastors those of whose services they may seem most in need. A common pastorate is of great advantage in bringing the various ranks of society together for the supply of their respective wants. It is very difficult to say in what grades of the community our ministers are most useful. Who can tell, for instance, whether Dr Chalmers effected more good in the higher or in the lower circles among which he ministered? He eminently benefited them both, and so do our other ministers—even those with ordinary qualifications. Our orders of ministers must be confined to those of scriptural warrant. The highest designation of our ministers is that of presbyter or elder, which, as associated with the dignity of his position, is as high in original indication as that of episcopus, overseer, or bishop, which also belongs to him.

In the same way as I humbly commend that portion of our eldership which professionally labours or toils in word and doctrine, so I commend that portion of our eldership which, though it does not professionally labour in word and doctrine, is still helpful, in a more private way, in the instruction and visitation of our people, and in the government of our Church. Our ruling elders form a distinctive feature, and that not the least valuable, in our Presbyterianism. They are chosen to office by the members of our congregations, of whom they are the representatives in our kirk-sessions and other Church courts, even to the highest. It is through them, more even than through the minister, that the whole of the members of a congregation come under surveillance. Our elders, who appear in our Assembly as representatives of our Presbyteries, are all *bonâ-fide* acting elders. Both as rulers, and Church visitants, and labourers, they are, as a class, very much superior in Christian and general intelligence to those whom I remember in my student days. They are from all classes

of the community, and they have varied adaptations for usefulness in that community. They are not only such "helps" and "governments" as were in the eye of the apostle, but promoters of evangelistic work, and visitors of families and individuals needing their spiritual aid.

To the Free Church in particular, the country is indebted for the general revival of the office of deacon, providing primarily, in union with our ministers and elders, for the management of the temporal affairs of congregations. The advantages of our deacons' courts, acting in harmony with the whole financial machinery of the Church, are obvious to all concerned.

Our general financial affairs are managed with an ability and success which the experience of every year shews to be most admirable. The most important of all our funds is the Sustentation Fund, by which our ministry is supported throughout the country, in the poorer as well as in the richer districts. Our obligations to Dr Buchanan, as the successor, connected with it, of Dr Chalmers, can neither be expressed nor requited. It is greatly to be desired that the allowances given to our ministers should be such as will not only free them and the members of their families from all anxious care about support, but such as will enable them to live in a manner suitable to their position as pastors of their flocks, and to the demands made upon them to continue their intellectual study and culture, so that from the treasures of their minds they may bring out things new and old. It is not only pastoral work that is demanded of them, but evangelistic and apologetic work in its highest forms.

And this leads me to observe in passing, that the signs of the times must be closely observed, especially by our ministers, though they are not to be overlooked by our elders and people. Though the number of real Christians is believed to be increasing throughout the land, there exists no little infidelity in it, greatly to be deplored. Though this infidelity of the present day is not so rude as that of the close of the past century and of former ages, it is not as a whole less conceited and uncandid. It does great injustice to the sacred writings,

by ignoring the multifarious and tested evidence with which they are associated; by endeavouring to ascribe to mythical origin what most certainly is veritable history and biography, with such specifications of time, place, persons, and antecedents and consequences as are sufficient to shew that what is before us is no mere cunningly-devised fable; and by ignoring the real essentials of the teaching of the blessed Jesus and of the apostles, who laid down their lives in testifying to the glories of His person, the wonders of His Word and works, His meritorious and salvation-giving sufferings and death, His resurrection from the grave, and His ascension to heaven. It is blind to what the sinner, convicted by his conscience and the Divine Spirit, sees of the Divine adaptation of the Gospel to give him hope before God and confidence before men. Its achievements are not equal to its boastings and those of its allies. Strauss lived to see his first fabric of error shattered to pieces by the missiles of orthodox German criticism; and his second and repaired fabrication seems still more unstable than the first. The plaudits given to Christ in some of His human aspects, by Renan, have secured more attention for his work perhaps than his refusal to admit the divine glory of Jesus in the Gospels in as absolute a sense as His humanity, forming, with His divinity, the hypostasis of His being; but it should be remembered that it is no new thing to betray Jesus with a kiss. This I say without accusing Monsieur Renan of playing false with his own convictions, or depreciating his Shemitic scholarship. It was no friendly voice, but that of the popularity-loving and cowardly Pilate which first exclaimed, "Behold the man," and it is only inattention to the doctrine of the incarnation and the Cross, found both in the Gospels and Epistles, which can, even provisionally, tolerate the partial and distorted views of an "Ecce Homo." But on this subject we cannot proceed further at present. These remarks apply particularly to that "Mighty God, with God the same," who is specially revealed in the New Testament, though "His goings forth have been of old from everlasting." A bishop of the Church of England (I refer to Colenso) has attempted to eliminate the miraculous element

from the Old Testament, especially from the history of God's chosen people, but, thank God, without success. He and all others like-minded with himself err most egregiously. The Creator of the universe, who has not left Himself without a witness, remains to all eternity its Governor. Since the first creative and formative processes connected with our globe commenced, there have been many miraculous forthputtings of the Divine power in fitting it for the abode of man, and in the creation of the innumerable species of plants and animals which, after living and dying, are now entombed in the rocky layers and beds of its crust. That Divine wisdom and power which thus miraculously prepared the world for the residence of man in a physical sense, may have continued to be exercised for the suitable training of man in a moral sense. There is no difficulty in supposing that, as testified by the Bible, miraculous interpositions were continued after the formation of man, for his instruction in the nature and responsibility of his position as the lord of the world on which he dwelt, and the intelligent and ministering priest of the visible universe by which he was surrounded; and that, even after he had fallen from his holy and happy state by the transgression of revealed law, God may have actually condescended to hold direct intercourse with him, in order to make known to him a scheme of salvation by a Redeemer, and maintain him and his believing descendants in a state of allegiance to Him as the God both of mercy and holiness. There is an infancy in the individual life of man, when he requires to be cared for and guided by external parental efforts and appliances; and there is an infancy in society and the Church—the godly portion of society—when such appliances, on a scale demanding the special interference of God, may be required for the training and culture of society and the Church. The traditions of all the nations of the earth are in favour of the idea that God has actually held gracious converse with man, independently of the still small voice of the works of both His creation and providence. Miraculous interpositions are actually recorded in the Bible; and even independently of its authority, our belief in them is counte-

nanced by the exigencies and harmonies of general history. The direct intercommunion of God with man in a paradisaical state is asserted by all the ancient books of the religions of the East—Indian, Persian, and Chinese—however greatly they may err in their descriptions. The Sphinxes of Egypt, Chaldea, and Assyria, and the Griffins of Persia, guarding the entrances to the palaces and temples; and even the Cerberi of the Greeks and Romans, guarding their Hades, bear a startling analogy to the warder Cherubim of the Garden of Eden. The occurrence of the Deluge is consonant with ancient Hindu and other Oriental tradition, as well as with the Hebrew history. The enslavement of the Israelitish race in Egypt is certified, not only by its own peculiar records, in this matter not to be doubted on any principles of historical judgment, but by the Egyptian historian Manetho, and the paintings on the Egyptian tombs; and how that depressed and oppressed race could have been freed from that bondage under a people so powerful and so stubborn in their establishments as the Egyptians, without Divine interference, it would be almost impossible to shew. The law of Moses purports to have been delivered to the body of the Israelites with miraculous manifestations of the Divine presence and sanction; and how, with this averment, it could have been received by the Israelites at the time we find it in their hands, if these manifestations had not been real, no explanation can be offered. The Israelites entered Canaan from Egypt from the south and south-east—for they never thoroughly conquered the Philistines to the south-west—and how, without bread from heaven and water from the flinty rock, they could pass through the barren deserts, the region of the valley of the shadow of death, in numbers sufficient to occupy Canaan, is more than infidelity can tell, though Volney, mistaking the character of the desert of the wanderings, has altogether overlooked the sources of their supply when he says, "The desert of Tih is that into which Moses conducted the Jews, and kept them for a whole generation, to initiate them into the art of war, and transform a multitude of shepherds into a nation of conquerors." The cleaving of the remarkably impetuous

floods of the Jordan, for the passage of the Israelites, is, to the observant traveller, the most easy way of accounting for the transference of the Israelites to its western shores. The conquest of the Canaanites in their rough mountainous abodes, and with their high-walled towns and cities, by a people, with their families, emerging from an absolute desert, however considerable in point of numbers, suggests such a degree of miraculous aid as was enjoyed by Joshua and his successors; and on the supposition that this aid was granted there is nothing beyond the expectancy of the circumstances in the idea of its continuance, when needful, under both the Judges and the Kings. There is not, indeed, a single miracle recorded in the Old Testament which had not a worthy occasion.

But I return to the work of our Church as brought to our notice in the proceedings of our Assembly.

The report on the Education Scheme is most satisfactory and encouraging. The lively and vigorous comment made upon it by Mr Nixon put forward in a way that will not be forgotten the claims of that scheme, and the admirable schools under it, congregational, side and industrial, missionary, grammar, and normal—altogether 603 in number, with an attendance of 64,139 pupils. The peculiar excellence of these schools is established by the incontrovertible testimony of the Government examiners. The Sabbath-schools of the Church, with 145,044 pupils and 13,075 teachers, are not less noticeable. The report of Mr William Dickson, embracing these schools, and his remarks and hints respecting them contained in his address, shew the anxious and constant, and prayerful care which he takes of their interests and those of their pupils. It is specially worthy of notice that his *Children's Record*, which is so admirably conducted, and which is brought out in such an admirable form by the publishers, has reached a monthly circulation of 51,000 copies. It may perhaps gratify its many friends to be informed that it is a great favourite even in distant India, and that many of the telling little articles which it contains are from time to time translated into Gujarátí and Maráthí by our excellent native

missionaries and ministers, Messrs Dhanjibhái Naurojí and Bábá Padmanjí, who have done so much, by periodicals and otherwise, to extend our Indian vernacular literature.

The reports of the College Committee, by Mr Laughton, explain how the results of our Colleges, to which I have already alluded, are so thankworthy and pregnant with hope as to our rising ministry.

The information given to us on the state of religion and morals by Dr Julius Wood; on the Home Mission and Church Extension by Dr William Wilson; on the Highlands and Islands by Dr M'Lauchlan; on Colonial Missions by Dr Adam; and on Continental Missions by Sheriff Cleghorn, prove that in the midst of the Church there exists a powerful evangelistic and recuperative energy, directed to those who bear the Christian name both near us and afar off. While we seek to Christianise those who are sunk in Jewish unbelief and in Gentile ignorance and apóstasy, let us never forget the claims of those who are already called by the name of Christ, but who are in need of ministrations suited to their spiritual wants and necessities.

The deputations by which we have been favoured from the Irish Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in England, have, as usual, been cordially welcomed by us; and the members of those deputations have communicated to us most important and valuable information. Our friends in Ireland are making a settlement of their financial affairs, consequent on their being deprived of the *regium donum* so long enjoyed by them, most satisfactory for the present and hopeful for the time which is to come. Their influence for good in Ireland is increasing from year to year; and that influence is not confined to the members of their own congregations, but, especially in the present crisis, to those of the disestablished Episcopal Church, now seeking to adjust and improve its own organisation and administration. They have, moreover, a decided evangelistic action, in which we cheerfully render our aid, especially as far as the Roman Catholics of Ireland are concerned. Our Presbyterian brethren are doing much for the promotion of education around them;

and in the present circumstances of the education question, they are particularly watchful lest the resources of the State should in any form be applied to the teaching of error. It is a great privilege which we enjoy when we assist them in their home missions, so wisely and prudently conducted. Like ourselves, they send ministers of high standing to the Colonies, the Continent, and the Jews. Their missions in India, conducted by a staff of most able and competent agents, as I can myself testify, are in a most promising and advancing condition. A similar testimony, I hope, will soon be given respecting their new mission to China. The English Presbyterian Church is of late years very rapidly advancing, and now numbers one hundred and thirty congregations, which, when added to the seventy of the United Presbyterian Church, equally pure, zealous, and efficient with itself, make up the number of Presbyterian Churches in England, with a definite scriptural creed and a regular organisation, to two hundred. We rejoice in the expansion of that Church, as providing for the wants of our numerous countrymen who cross the Border. We rejoice in its opening its doors and offering its ordinances to the many Englishmen who have fightings without and fears within, because of the progress around them of error, rationalistic and ritualistic, so grievous to genuine Protestants of every class. Our biennial collection to its home mission testifies to our sense of its importance. We are thankful because it is discharging its duty to the great empire of China, by supporting there a most interesting and successful mission, which we ourselves think it a privilege to aid by contributing to it money and such men as the simple, fearless, ingenious, and apostolic William Burns, encouraged in a remarkable way to enter its service by the talented, able, learned, and accomplished James Hamilton.

We are sorry that the only member this year of the deputation from the (reunited) Presbyterian Church of America, who, as far as we know, has yet reached this country, was obliged to leave the Assembly immediately after its opening, in which he privately expressed a very great interest. By telegram, however, we have been informed that the arrange-

ments necessary on the completion of the reunion have all been effected in a most harmonious manner; that our own Dr M'Cosh—still ours in heart and feeling, though given by us to the great Western Continent—was thought of for the honour of presiding over the first General Assembly of the great Church to which I now refer; and that Mr Arnot, one of our deputies to that Church, has had the honour of preaching before the President and Vice-President of the United States, and some of the members of the American Senate and House of Representatives, among whom, I believe, he will have justified the title, "The Solomon of the British pulpit," conferred upon him by the beloved and distinguished brother in the ministry whose biography he has lately given to the world in such a becoming, graceful, and instructive form. Dr Owen, one of the honoured missionaries of the American Presbyterian Church in the north-west provinces of India, has given us valuable information respecting the history and organisation of that large and prosperous mission. The evangelistic cause in India is greatly indebted to him for improved translations of the Scriptures into the Hindi and Urdu languages. Mr Arthur, one of our own colonial ministers, gave us interesting tidings on the state and progress of religion in Central America.

The deputation from Spain was exceedingly touching and moving to us all. That country, notwithstanding its picturesque scenery and much that is interesting in its people, is associated in our memories with Moorish invasions, Papal tyranny, persecution and expulsion of the Jews, resistance to the Reformation and persecution to death of the Reformers, an expedition against England of a formidable Armada, bloodshed in the Low Countries and the South American colonies, the rise of Jesuitism, and many other events which are painful in their recognition. It is now, however, viewed by us with hope and joy. The revolution which was lately effected within its borders, and on which it is not becoming for me here to say anything in the view of its political aspects, was attended with little loss of life. It has led to the espousement and the practice of civil and religious liberty, and it

has opened the door to the Bible circulator and to the Protestant evangelist. The consequence, by the Divine blessing, is the formation within the long depressed Spain of a Free Reformed Presbyterian Church, the sincere and zealous representatives of which, Señor Cabrera and Mr Clough, were welcomed by us with great cordiality. The communications which they made to us stirred our spirits to their lowest depths.

The deputies who visited us from the Evangelical Societies and Churches of Geneva and Lyons, and the Union of the Evangelical Churches of France, had the cordial welcome given to them accorded to the honoured brethren who have come to us on former occasions. With the importance of the French-speaking population of the Continent we are all most deeply impressed. Our obligations to Geneva at the time of the Reformation, so gratefully remembered by us, we cannot well repay, though the revival of evangelical religion there in late times has justly been attributed to the honoured Scotchman, Robert Haldane. Dr Merle D'Aubigné, whom we so greatly respect and admire, has sent us his congratulations. We thank God for his preservation to the present time amidst his abundant and invaluable labours; and we pray that God may still more strengthen him, that he may continue to favour the Protestant world with his counsels in the view of the present threatened Papal aggression at Rome. To the special grandeur and importance of France none of us can be blind. The late establishment within it of constitutional liberty brings great honour to the Third Napoleon and to his patriotic ministers. Its literati, occupying so high a position in the sphere of European thought, are more indulgent to the work and memory of the French Reformers than their predecessors. The Church of France, we were told last night, contains many religions. The Gallican spirit of independence is rising within it; while the Jesuit spirit, which has had so much to do with France since the termination of the great war, is putting forth its greatest force. France, as a nation, is not fond of Jesuitism: and more than the youth of its colleges are exclaiming—

"Si cum Jesuitis,
Non cum Jesu itis."

The Protestant Churches of France, and especially those of the Evangelical Union, are raising our hopes of that land being soon visited by the outpouring of the life-giving Spirit of God.

A deputy from Norway is a rarity in our Assemblies; but one of this position (Mr Haerlan) we have had on the present occasion. His address to us last night was of an animating character. We have been delighted to be assured by him that the glaciers of the cold north are, in a spiritual sense, beginning to melt away by the rays and beams of the Sun of righteousness, penetrating the clouds which have been so long resting upon them. Revivals, begun of late years in Scandinavia, excite our hopes and call forth our prayers.

The appeal made to us by Mr Wrengfield, of Dusseldorf, in behalf of the Protestant seminary at Smyrna is a very intelligible one. The enterprise there is similar to that proceeding in the schools on the flanks of the Lebanon, which Dr Duff and Principal Lumsden have gone to visit. The report upon these schools we shall look for with special interest, in the view of the distinguished fathers of the Church who have been commisssoned to inquire into these matters.

But to our more direct missionary efforts, as bearing both on Jews and Gentiles, I shall now advert.

With regard to the Mission to the Jews, so devoutly and fervently reported and commented upon, especially by Mr Moody Stuart, the Convener of the Committee having charge of that mission, and Mr Wilson, of the Barclay Church, I would beg to say a few words, founded on my long experience of that people, still beloved for their fathers' sakes, and still so highly appreciated for their promised and expected destiny. The attitude of the Jew to the religion of Jesus, it is correctly said in the report, "is that of hereditary antagonism; and even in the very texture of his mind he ordinarily reminds one more of the man who has grieved and quenched the Spirit of the Lord than of the mere outcast who has never

been in possession of Divine privileges." The great body of the Jews, now, are under the influence of Rabbinism, which is not only hostile to Christianity, but which, in point of fact, is nearly as great a corruption of the Old Testament as heathenism is of the patriarchial faith, and Popery of the Christian. This system of unnatural and wild interpretation of the Bible,—of puerile and fanciful conceits, of vain traditions alleged to have been received from the fathers, of Pharisaical pride, and of priestly domination,—was bad in the time of Jesus; but since that time it has reached its maturity in palpable folly, in multifarious injurious injunctions, and in fictional and frivolous exemplifications. All who are acquainted with the Talmudic and the rest of the Rabbinical literature will admit these facts. All who come in contact with the Jews, especially the Eastern Jews, have seen confirmations and illustrations of them of the most impressive and affecting character. They have observed among these Jews a spirit of credulity, superstition, dogmatism, and bondage, united with poverty, affliction, and depression, which can hardly elsewhere be surpassed. The veil of unbelief still remains on the hearts of the Turkish, Arabian, and African Jews, and those of other lands. They look to the law and the prophets through the distorting glass of prejudice and presumption. They lose sight of the righteousness of God, which is by faith, and trust in the endless and minute ceremonies of a self-appointed worship, supplemented, as they think, by the merits of the deeds of themselves and those of their great ancestors. We have Abraham to our father is their plea before God as well as their boast before man. Their Messianic hope is still bounded by a mere earthly kingdom and dominion. For the coming of a temporal deliverer they are now more importunate than ever, coupling with him the glory of their nation, city, sanctuary, and priesthood, and having no desire for a spiritual Saviour and Deliverer. But among the Jews of the present day are those who manifest an advanced Sadducean, as well as those who exhibit an advanced Pharisaic spirit. The most distinct representatives of this class are to be found principally in the west of Europe, especially in Germany, Holland, and

France. To the ancient Sadducean spirit of unbelief they have added the rash, wild, and irreverent spirit of modern neology. They respect the memory of their great ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, and the prophets, or, as they sometimes call them, their masters or fathers; but they are not satisfied either with the order of life which these ancients brought to notice in their day, or with their inspired intimations and delineations of the future. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; and lovers of this world, to the disbelief in, or oversight of, that which is to come. They have set their hearts on riches, and in not a few instances have found riches. In the lands of their dispersion and sojourn they have got their "splendid mansions" and "ornamented chambers." They have their "damsels clothed with embroidered garments." They have the "delicate oils," the "joyful wines," and the "fine flour" of which so many who are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh express their want at the western wall of the temple enclosure at Jerusalem. National honours have been conferred upon individuals of their number; and even kings and emperors, who are much dependent upon them for financial accommodation, shew them much personal respect. The special longings of the Jewish mind are scarcely to be observed among them. Peculiar Jewish customs are greatly modified by them, and have well-nigh disappeared from their society. These observations are not intended to apply to all the wealthy, and what have been called the liberalised Jews of Western Europe. Neither is it intended to convey the idea that all the Sadducean Jews are men of wealth. Some of them are poor indeed, and profligate as they are poor. Some of this class, who have wandered to the East are not wanting in Bombay, going thither from Hungary, the mouths of the Danube, and Constantinople. All converted Jews, like converted Gentiles, are miracles of the Divine power and grace. Such converted Jews appear conspicuously in connection with the missions of our Church. The late Dr King, of Athens, who made the acquaintance of those at Pesth, declared in a letter, still in my possession,

that they were the most remarkable converts whom he had been privileged to see. I can myself personally confirm this testimony.

With our great missions in India I am myself most intimately acquainted. In the extemporaneous address respecting them which I had the pleasure of delivering to the Assembly the other evening, I took but a simple glance at their peculiarities, agencies, and results. They will, I trust, form with me a great theme during this my visit to the land of my fathers. The interests of India daily rise in my estimation, and the advance of that great country, with its two hundred millions of inhabitants, appears to myself to be unexampled in modern times, whether viewed politically, socially, educationally, or evangelistically. In our Viceroy, Presidency Governors, and Lieutenant-Governors, down to the ordinary classes of administrators, civil and military, European and native, benevolence may be seen to be in remarkable activity. The moral, religious, and material progress of the country is visible, almost from day to day, and is such certainly as I never expected to witness. The general philanthropy of our countrymen in India is much to be admired. The native mind is awakening in almost every province of the land. The native converts have been tested (at the time of the mutiny by persecution), and they have not been found wanting. Numbers are being daily added to them of such as shall be saved. I cannot trust my feelings to speak of the faith, love, and labour of the bright exemplars which they in particular have witnessed in the field around them, some of whom (never to be forgotten) have fallen in my own sight and at my own side. I have definite proposals to make respecting the missions of our Church in India, founded on a long experience, but I shall withhold them until I have an opportunity of consulting about them with the highly-honoured and highly-distinguished Convener of our Foreign Mission Committee, whose absence on this occasion I very deeply regret, though I know that his mission to the Lebanon is one of special interest. Africa—where our other missions to the Gentiles are—is very like India in form and

shape, but it is much larger, and even an India could be cut out of it without its being very much missed. The population of each of the countries is supposed to be very much of the same extent, though it greatly differs in its social character. In Mr Govan, Africa has an intelligent and excellent advocate: and to him is committed in Scotland, for the time being, the representation of its cause. For the Gordon Mission, there forming in peculiarly interesting circumstances, we all, I am sure, offer up our fervent prayers to God.

With the way in which the general business of our Church has been conducted, I have been greatly delighted; but I feel that it would be presumption in me to review it in its details.

And now, Reverend and Beloved Fathers and Brethren in the ministry of Christ, let me in conclusion address to you a few words of exhortation respecting the spirit and manner in which we conduct our ministrations, which, I feel, are as much needed by my own heart, as by any other minister of this Assembly.

1. Let us seek to be personally and deeply impressed and affected by the word of God and of the Saviour Jesus Christ, which we seek to communicate to the objects of our ministry. We must ever see clearly the revelations of God, and feel deeply the presence and power of His truth and Spirit, if we wish to produce any profitable or saving effects on those to whom we deliver the message of our Lord. If we wish to speak to the heart, we must speak from the heart. Unless there be heat at the centre there can be no radiation of it to the circumference. The influences of the Holy Spirit, though he worketh when and where and how he willeth, usually flow through pathways or channels of spiritual affinity, as the electric fluid of heaven through metallic and other suitable conductors. Though the word of God, both when read and heard, is still the word of God, and is in its own nature both self-explanatory and self-defensive, the ministerial communication of that word has only a personal ministerial blessing with it when it is spoken and read in the fear and love of God. An unconverted and unspiritual minister, even when

he utters the truth of God, is nearly as much an animal machine (in the hands of God, it may be) as the ass of Balaam which rebuked the madness of the prophet, or the crowing cock which preached repentance to the timid and back-sliding Peter. We must be ever experimentally and spiritually exercised by the truth of God. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we must persuade men. Having tasted and seen that God is good, we must say to those around us, Come near, all ye that fear or desire to fear the Lord, and we shall tell what He hath done for our souls. Beholding the glory and majesty and grace and loving-kindness of the Saviour, we must point to Him the attention of our fellow-men, and seek to have them espoused to him as the husband of their souls. We must speak of the joys of salvation as those who have drunk of their living and life-giving waters. We must point to the regions of bliss as those who are familiar in devout contemplation with their unspeakable splendour and glory. We must seek, without presumption, to adopt the language of the confiding and loving John in his first general epistle—"That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life: that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and his son Jesus Christ."

2. Let us know nothing, as the great and ultimate topic of our ministry among the people around us, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When we preach the law, the reflection of God's own holiness and justice, let us hold it up as a mirror showing those stains of guilt and that moral impurity which require to be obliterated and washed away by the sacrificial blood and sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness. When we preach the goodness of God, let us show that it leads to repentance, as intimating that that goodness, being far beyond the desert of guilty man, there must be forgiveness with God, to be sought and received, that He may be feared. If we directly preach the gospel, let us show its concentration

and essence in the great fact that God has so loved the world, that He has appointed and accepted the sacrificial offering of his only-begotten Son as the price, redemption, and reconciliation of His people. If we speak of the Divine life in the soul, let us represent it as flowing from that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. If we speak of Providence, let us declare how it is administered under the care and guidance of Him to whom all power has been given in heaven and in earth. If we speak of death, let us show how the victory over this, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, is accomplished through Him who liveth yet 'was dead, who is alive for evermore, and who holds the keys of hell and of death. If we speak of heaven, the abode of glory, let us show that it is the purchase of Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God.

3. Let us be everywhere and at all times the servants of Christ. We must let the light of the Saviour which we bear shine forth, not only in the public assembly, but in the social and family circle, and even the private apartment. We must not only deliver the message of God in congregational meeting-places, but carry it without them as heralds of mercy, going forth to the world in all directions. Let us sow beside all waters, and let us seek and ingeniously make waters for irrigation beside which we may sow the heavenly seed. General and special evangelistic efforts are essential functions of our office. Let us look to the members of the flock, and to those whom we seek to bring into the fold of the good Shepherd, not merely in the aggregate, but in their personal individualities. Let us seek for souls and watch for souls as those who have to give in their account to their great Master. Let the spirit of Jesus hallow all our intercourse with our fellow-men; and let the Christian in our case overshadow the man and the student, however distinguished. Let the last testimony of each of us be—"I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance

toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us take heed unto ourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers, to feed the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood. Let us not cease to warn every one day and night, even with tears. Let each of us ponder the solemn admonition of the Apostle —"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." "Watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

4. Let us appropriate to ourselves, as the ministers of Christ, all the encouragement which is afforded to us by the Divine Master whom we serve. When, in the view of the duties and responsibilities of our office, we humbly and earnestly ask, Who is sufficient for these things? we receive the loving and happy response, "My grace is sufficient for you; my strength is made perfect in weakness." We are messengers of Christ to His Church and the world; and He qualifies and upholds His agents, as well as appoints them. The ambassadors of His court share in its stately provisions and honours. He sendeth no one a warfare on his own charges. He Himself goes forth with His people to their work, and He abides with them in that work, making the joy of the Lord their strength. He imparts to us abundant consolation and peace, as needed by us for all the exigencies of our ministry. He both knows and acknowledges our faith, and charity, and patience, and toil, and suffering. He will give us a gracious reward, for His voice to each of us is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." May we cleave to Him and His service with all our hearts, wherever and in whatever circumstances that service may be rendered by us! May we fulfil the ministry which has been given to us in all its amplitude! And may we be among the number of those who shall turn many to righteousness, and who shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever!

Thanking you very warmly and cordially for honouring me by calling me to this chair, the duties of which I have so imperfectly discharged, and for the indulgence and kindness which you have extended to me while occupying it, I now bid you Farewell, and commend you, Fathers and Brethren, my esteemed and beloved fellow-labourers, to the grace of "Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

Reverend Fathers and Brethren,—We met in the Name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church; and in the same Name and by the same authority, I hereby dissolve this Assembly, and appoint the next General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland to be holden on Thursday the 18th day of May 1871.

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